

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of performing online valve diagnostics for a valve operating in a process, the method comprising:

obtaining valve information while said valve operates in response to a control signal controlling said process, said valve operating through a series of gradual movements;

said valve information including at least two of setpoint data, position data and pressure data;

deriving at least one of step response, friction and spring range for said valve based on said valve information.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

deriving a model of valve response to setpoint changes in response to said valve information;

adjusting said model in response to error between predictions generated by said model and actual position information; and

applying a step input to model to generate a step response.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein:

adjusting said model includes adjusting a first parameter affecting response time.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein:

adjusting said model includes adjusting a second parameter affecting overshoot.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein:

said deriving said model includes taking a derivative of a setpoint data and taking a derivative of position data;

solving for a set of coefficients that minimizes the error estimating said derivative of position data from said derivative of input data to define a wavelet;

said applying said step input to said model includes integrating said wavelet; and

deriving response time and overshoot from said step response.

6. The method of claim 2 wherein:

said deriving said model includes obtaining plurality of wavelets in response to setpoint changes;

said adjusting includes selecting one of said wavelets with minimal error;

deriving a step response by applying said wavelet to an impulse; and

deriving response time and overshoot from said step response.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

deriving a distribution of said position data by transforming said pressure data and said position data in response to a spring range of said valve;

determining friction of said valve in response to said distribution.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein:

said determining friction includes determining a difference between an upper percentile and a lower percentile of said distribution.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein:

said upper percentile is 90 percent and said lower percentile is 10 percent.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein:

said deriving said distribution includes projecting position data to a pressure axis along a slope corresponding to said spring range.

11. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

deriving a plurality of distributions of said position data in response to a plurality of spring ranges of said valve;

selecting one of said spring ranges in response to variance of said plurality of distributions.

12. A system for deriving valve characteristics of a valve operating in a process, the system comprising:

a process controller generating control signals to operate said valve through a series of gradual movements;

a positioner receiving said control signals and generating a signal for positioning said valve;

a controller receiving valve information from said positioner, said valve information including at least two of setpoint data, position data and pressure data;

said controller deriving at least one of step response, friction and spring range for said valve based on said valve information.

13. A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for deriving valve characteristics of a valve operating in a process, the storage medium including instructions for causing a controller to implement a method comprising:

obtaining valve information while said valve operates in response to a control signal

controlling said process, said valve operating through a series of gradual movements;

said valve information including at least two of setpoint data, position data and pressure data;

deriving at least one of step response, friction and spring range for said valve based on said valve information.